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ABSTRACT

Although a number of Chicano colleges were founded during the 1970s, none of them survive today. This book provides an institutional case study of Colegio Cesar Chavez (Oregon), the first independent four-year Chicano college with accreditation candidacy. The study examines Colegio's founding, institutional mission and philosophy, campus community, and institutional life, and focuses on reasons for its closure within a wider social historical context. Colegio Cesar Chavez was established in 1973 as an alternative institution dedicated to expanding educational opportunities for Chicanos. Its founding arose from efforts to salvage Mt. Angel College, a small Catholic college that had lost its accreditation and had huge debts. Colegio brought a bilingual/bicultural perspective to higher education and addressed the needs of nontraditional students by implementing a "college without walls" in which students were responsible for their own educational progress and combined classroom work with practical experience. Colegio sought to manifest the goals of the Chicano social movement by promoting self-determination and social equity. Despite a positive beginning, numerous problems and issues undermined Colegio's development and contributed to its demise. These included lack of financial base, accreditation struggles, legal battles with the Department of Housing and Urban Development, internal politics, difficulties arising from the school's nontraditional character, and national trends of retrenchment in higher education and growing social conservatism. Insights are offered to future promoters of minority colleges. An appendix describes research methodology. (Contains references in a bibliography, an index, and photographs.) (SV)

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